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HISTORY

of

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

at

PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY

By ALLEN E. BEALS

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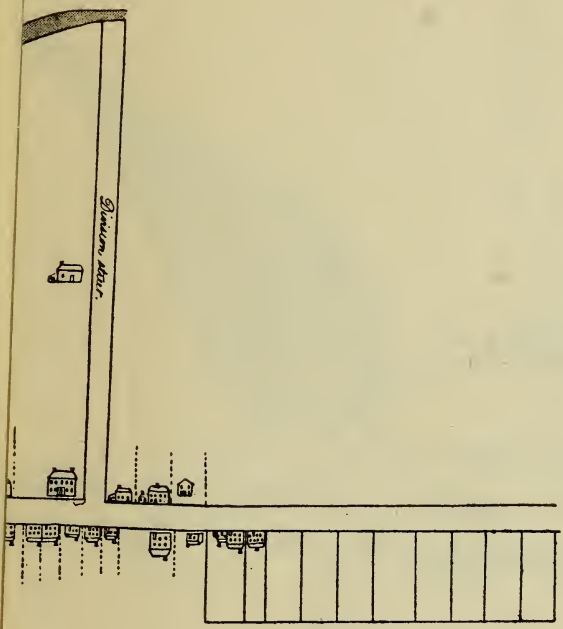

Copy of the oldest Known

MAP OF PLAINFIELD.

From an original in the possession of Wm M. Stillman.

This copy made Jan. 1901 by

F. J HUBBARD,

CIVIL ENGINEER

PLAINFIELD, N.J.

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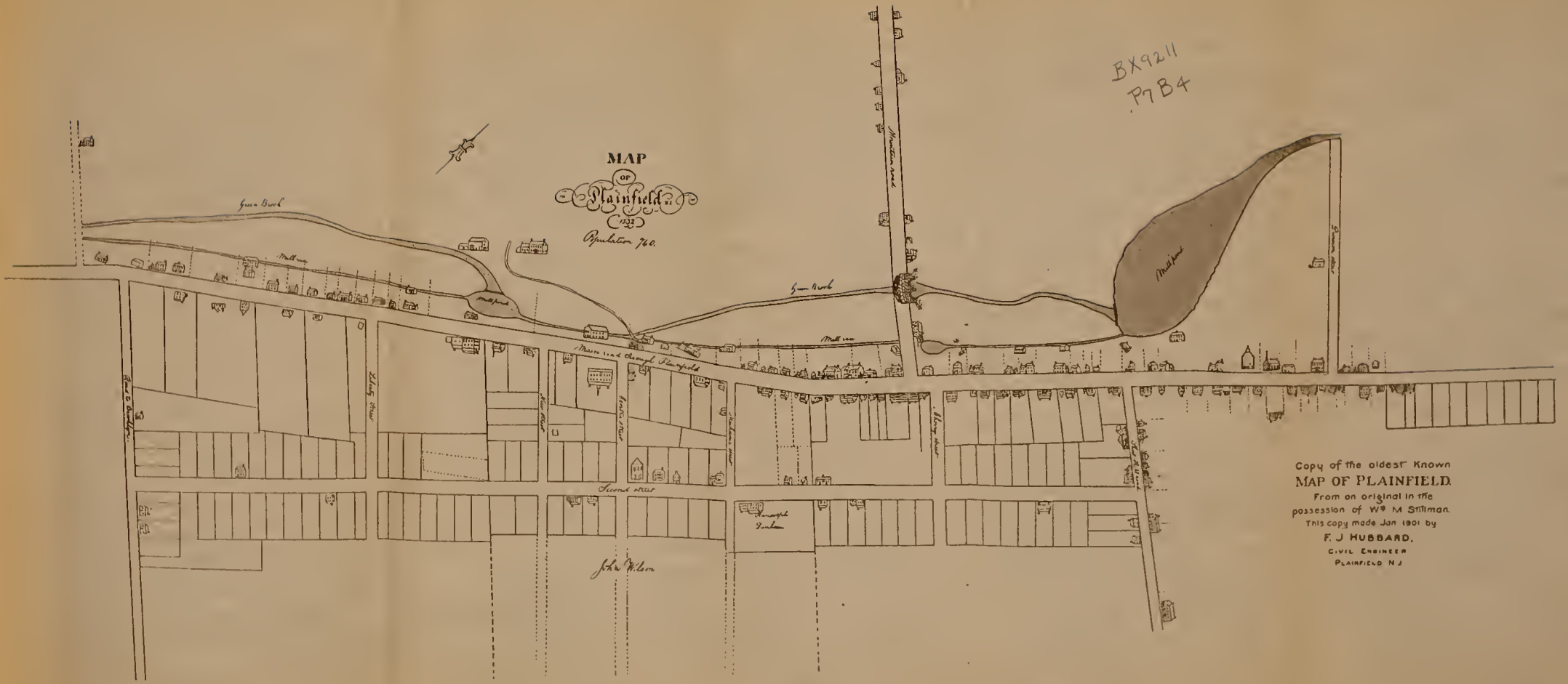
MAP
OF
Plainfield
1832
Population 760.
Guen Brook
Mill run
Mill pond
Mill run
Mill pond
Mountain road
Main road through Plainfield
Second street
John Wilson
Copy of the oldest Known
MAP OF PLAINFIELD
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PLAINFIELD N J

History

of

The First Presbyterian Church

at

Plainfield, New Jersey

By ALLEN E. BEALS

Commemorating the One Hundredth Anniversary of
the founding and organization of
The Presbyterian Church of Plainfield, New Jersey
July 9th and 10th, 1825

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In kindly memory o.
Living and Departed Friends he has known in

"The Church of Brotherly Love"

this work is respectfully dedicated by
its author

GIFT
AUTHOR
FEB 2 '26

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Compiler's Note—This manuscript is submitted with profound realization on the part of its author that it must be, of necessity (considering the circumstances under which it has been prepared), in some, if not many, respects unworthy of the subject with which it deals, namely, One Hundred Years of Influence in this Community of the First Presbyterian Church of Plainfield. Great indulgence is craved from those who may scan it with the eye of the literary critic. It has been the author's purpose to transform ordinarily dry and uninteresting dates and chronological sequence along the very thin line of pastorates by bringing out the human-interest touches, much as a narrative that might be recounted to a family grouped beside a homely fireplace with the subtle consciousness that former pastors and people are spiritually listening in as to a tale that is being told.

Tuesday, September 8, 1925. A. E. B.

The History of the First Presbyterian Church of Plainfield, New Jersey

By Allen E. Beals

CHAPTER I

The Lord's Supper Beneath the Green Brook Trees

OUR Blessed Lord, who supped beneath the Green Brook Trees with eighteen founders of the first Presbyterian Church in Plainfield, one hundred years ago, alone can know and trace the world-'round good their successive hosts have wrought.

It long has passed the power and ken of human tongue or pen to fully cite the blessings that since have flowed beyond the clarion of its heralding or tolling bell; and as the years begin to drape the mantle of antiquity about the sacred pile that more than half a thousand now look upon as their church home one cannot help but feel impotent adequately to trace the halo that pervades it much less to portray the symbolic setting that marked its modest birth.

While Time has warped the pristine beauty of the spot where arching trees were rafters and greensward the carpet of the homeless flock, it has sublimely glorified the aspirations and the prayers of those who were the first Presbyterians to worship in their home church here, on that memorable Sabbath day, July 10, 1825.

Contemporary events alone convey to men and women of today a worthy conception of the times in which this event in the religious life of Plainfield occurred.

John Quincy Adams, the sixth President of the United States, had just entered office four months before, and the political feud between the President and Andrew Jackson, defeated in the campaign the preceding year, was just beginning to sweep the country.

The Monroe Doctrine, promulgated in 1822, was still astounding the countries of Europe and the great dispute over the subject of slavery which was to eventuate in the Civil War forty years later, was fanned by the Missouri Compromise that sought to draw a geographical line of demarkation between the pro-

slavery south and the anti-slavery north. People were just beginning to realize that the Mason-Dixon line, the result of a survey by Mason, a surveyor of the North and Dixon, a surveyor of the South, was, in fact, destined to be a power for dividing the nation against itself, and, filled with Biblical admonitions, churchmen were prophesying that the nation, no more than a house, could thus stand.

The Village of Plainfield consisted of only sixty scattered buildings then. There was a stream of rather generous proportions that made its way from the Scotch Plains notch through the watercourse that is now not much more than a trickling rivulet, by comparison, and which we misname Green Brook.

But then it broadened out into a pond that served to store up water power for a grist mill now between Watching Avenue and Somerset Street. This site was surrounded almost entirely by a grove of stately chestnut, oak and elm trees, save for a mossy place where the farmers of the country-side brought their grain to be ground into flour.

On Sunday, July 10, 1825, this was the spot where the Presbyterian church in Plainfield first saw the light of day.

On the day before, Saturday, July 9, 1825, according to the minutes of the Session, carefully preserved by John M. Bettman:

> "Agreeably to the appointment of the Presbytery of Elizabethtown, The Rev. John McDowell, D.D., and the Rev. Alexander G. Frazer, attended for the purpose of organizing a Presbyterian Church in this place."

At that time the following persons presented certificates and were recorded as the original eighteen founders of the Plainfield Presbyterian Church:

William Sayre	New Providence
Anna, wife of William Sayre	New Providence
Elizabeth Littell	New Providence
Mrs. Sarah Layton	Baskingridge
John King	Baskingridge
Eliza, wife of John King	Baskingridge
Deborah, wife of Frederick Cadmus	Bound Brook
Dinah, wife of Cornelius Cadmus	Bound Brook
Elizabeth C. Vermeule	Bound Brook
Ruth P. Cook	Newburgh
Robert Anderson	New Brunswick

Agnes, wife of Robert Anderson	New Brunswick
Pierpont Potter	Westfield
Rebecca Manning	Westfield
Sarah, wife of Matthew A. Brown	Westfield
Conrad Neil	New York
Lydia Gardiner	Orange
John Layton, Jr.	Bedminster

At the same time Robert Anderson, proprietor of a dry goods store at the South East corner of Watchung Avenue and East Front Street and John Layton, Jr., "were set apart" to the offices of ruling Elders and Deacons whereupon "The Church of Plainfield" was declared to be duly organized, at 3 o'clock P. M., July 9, 1825.

On the following Sabbath, (July 10th), the Rev. Dr. McDowell conducted the first known local service of Worship of Almighty God under the rules of the Presbyterian faith and "under the shade of the trees" there participated in the rites of The Lord's Supper after hearing Dr. McDowell preach from 1 Corinthians 11:18:

> "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."

On October 7th, 1825, the session minutes show that the congregation had increased to 23.

Prior to these dates Presbyterians living in and near Plainfield were obliged to attend public worship in either Bound Brook or Westfield. There were no regular means of transportation between the two communities.

If a registered member of the church failed to attend regularly, to the services of public worship, he was reported to Session which waited upon the delinquent to ascertain why he or she did not attend or why he or she "turned the back upon the Lord's Table."

It can easily be understood why, therefore, the growing community of Plainfield, taking in as it did territory between Baskingridge, Bound Brook, New Bunswick and Westfield, desired to have a Presbyterian church of its own, because the perils of travel in winter were great and in the summer, often most uncomfortable, especially for the aged.

Scotch Plains was the metropolis of all this surrounding coun-

try in those days, and even up to 1840, until the railroad tracks were moved over to Fanwood, some years later, all mail was received and delivered to Plainfielders in Scotch Plains and public gatherings in the interest of Plainfielders were held in the Town Hall at that place. The City of Plainfield was not incorporated as a city until 1860.

Church services for the Presbyterian congregation were held in the Academy conducted by the Rev. Lewis Bond, which stood a few yards away from the present church property to the west, although in later years that name was given to another semi-public building that stood at what is now Arlington Avenue and Fourth Street.

These services were conducted by the Rev. Lewis Bond, of whom first mention in the official Session minutes occurs under date of January 9th, 1826, when he was recorded as being the "Stated supply" and who, as such, acted at that meeting as moderator. It is evident, however, that he served the congregation as its leader shortly after the church was organized in 1825. He continued as pastor until April, 1857, a total of 32 years during which time he received into membership nearly 500 persons, of whom 200 were received on certificates from other churches. He died January 23rd, 1885.

During his long pastorate, 200 were dismissed to other churches, of whom 86 united in forming the Second Presbyterian church under the Presbytery of Newark. This church was, for a time, also located on Front Street. The Rev. William Whittaker was its first pastor serving until 1885. It later purchased the property at Crescent Avenue and "Broadway," that having been the name of Watchung Avenue above "Peace Street" which terminated at East Seventh Street. The First Presbyterian church also contributed largely in membership toward the founding of Trinity Reformed Church.

Meeting sometimes in the Academy, and sometimes in the homes of its members, there soon arose great need for a regular house of worship.

The congregation, as has been seen, was very small, none of them having means, probably, beyond their daily requirements, because we are told in some of the records available from the archives of the first pastor of this church, that while twenty-five years before there were only twenty houses in the village of Plainfield, there were, indeed, only sixty when the Presbyterian church

The Original Presbyterian Church Building in Plainfield, Erected 1826

in Plainfield was organized. At the time the map, which accompanies this sketch, was made (1832), there were only 168 houses in the community and, in his quarter century sermon the Rev. Mr. Bond records the fact that as late as 1851 this number had been increased to only 400 dwellings, 8 churches and 15 storehouses.

The same papers make record of the fact that the first frame house ever erected in Plainfield, noting the passing of the tent and log cabin habitations of the first settlers and Indians, was in 1700 and there are authentic records to show that a part of this original first permanent shelter in this city was part of the John Wilson home.

Prior to the organization of the Presbyterian church in Plainfield there had been no weekly prayer meetings nor had there ever been a Bible Class, much less a Sunday school. The population of Plainfield at the time our church was organized was 300, 740 in 1832, and in 1850 it had increased to 2,000.

The eight churches then supplying the spiritual needs of this community were able to join the first Pastor of this church in rejoicing in the fact that they could count one-half of the population as members of the Church of Christ. This was in great contrast with the record of forty communicants in the Baptist church, twenty-three in the Presbyterian church and (not counting the membership of the Society of Friends) there totalled in all this church community, around 1825, from Westfield to Basking-ridge, Bound Brook, New Brunswick and Rahway, only a little over sixty professed disciples of Christ!

Reference to the accompanying map will make it possible for the reader to picture the sparsely settled place that was destined to be the great industrial and residential community of nearly 40,000 inhabitants living in Plainfield and North Plainfield toward the close of the first quarter of the twentieth century. In 1832 it was really a thin line of small frame dwellings stretching the length of Front Street from Plainfield Avenue to a little beyond Division Street, some few structures on "Cherry Street," now Park Avenue, some on Division Street, now Westervelt Avenue, and North Plainfield was not more than an equally thin line of dwellings for a block or two beyond the brook which was spanned by a rustic bridge beside which was a ford where the folks stopped to chat and trade over their carts while their horses refreshed themselves in the stream.

CHAPTER II

What Came from Cordially Greeting a Stranger

ONE hundred years before the Presbyterian church in Plainfield was organized, or a span of years equalling those between that event and the year to which we reverently pay homage, the first organized meeting of the orthodox Quakers was held at "Tow Town," later known as New Brooklyn, just outside of the present community of New Market. It is recorded that these meetings were held at the home of John Laing, forebear of the John Laing whose inn, famous in its day, stood upon the site of the Babcock building. He gave a plot on which to erect a meeting house on March 27, 1731 and the Woodbridge Monthly Meeting gave its permission to erect a building directing that it should not exceed "24 feet square and 14 feet between 'joynts.' " It was completed "and all accounts settled" by the latter part of 1736. The larger plot, standing near the present railroad station was given and the Meeting House still standing was built in 1788.

In thus giving a setting of the conditions surrounding the founding of our church and of the state of the community into which it was launched, it may not be inappropriate to note the sequence of the establishment of other early churches in this community:

The Presbyterian church was the fourth, in this respect; the next organization following that of the Quakers being the Baptists, nearly one hundred years later, or in 1818; the Methodist church in 1820, the Presbyterian in 1825, Seventh Day Baptist in 1838, Second Baptist church, in 1842; Second Presbyterian church (Crescent Avenue) in 1844; St. Mary's Roman Catholic church in 1849; Grace Episcopal church in 1852; Central Reformed church 1863, which, however, became defunct in 1883; Mount Olive Baptist church 1870 (colored); German Reformed church, 1873; Park Avenue Baptist church, 1876; Church of Heavenly Rest, 1879.

Trinity Reformed church and the Congregational church were formed between the years 1879 and 1880.

The erection of the original Presbyterian church in this city brings to mind the circumstances under which the land came to be given and its dramatic sequence.

There lived in Plainfield at the time a gentleman and a considerable land owner who, while not particularly interested in churches prior to his coming to Plainfield, had been cordially and graciously received in the ancestral Bond Manor, which stood on the present site of the City Hall. Feeling the welcoming influence of the quadruple row of trees, now marking East Seventh Street, having been the driveway leading up to the portico, he became interested in the school master and preacher and after the organization of the church under the Green Brook trees, came to the pastor of the flock with his wife, and offered their help, saying that they were willing to deed over to the Presbyterian church in Plainfield, "Meeting House Lot."

Ample confirmation is to be found of this couple's gracious gift in the archives in the custody of the Register of Deeds, Newark, New Jersey, which at the time was the seat for Union as well as Essex counties.

There, under date of 1826 may be seen a transcript of the original deed, done in clear, bold handwriting, apparently with a quill pen, and, after the usual formalities of such documents, it proceeds to grant "forever, for the sole purpose of a Presbyterian Meeting House, Academy and Burying Ground, and no other, that lot of land known by the name of 'Meeting House Lot' situated in the Village of Plainfield in the township of Westfield," signed Matthias A. Brown and Sarah Ann Brown, his wife, dated February 5, 1826, and by Caleb Freeman, Jarvis B. Ayres, Frederick Cadmus, John King and the Trustees of the Presbyterian church in Plainfield. This instrument was duly attested May 11, 1826 before John Woodruff, "Commissioner for taking Acknowledgments."

The years slowly doled out their meed of fortune, fair as well as ill, and in the course of time fate weaved a pathetic web of want around the benevolent gentleman of earlier years. Among the few stores of that day doing business in Plainfield, that of Drs. John and Lewis Craig, druggists, for whom the North Plainfield street was named, is memorable as the shelter of the man whose generosity made permanent the location of our church.

Upon this site was erected a frame church of which the only graphic likeness so far known to be in existence is on the Map of 1832, accompanying this sketch. The famed academy later

had its location in the basement of the church and among its pupils were James E. Martine, former U. S. Senator from New Jersey, William H. Shotwell, Abraham L. Cadmus and other prominent Plainfielders of their time.

It was a white frame church with a steeple that barely surmounted the stately trees about it, with green shingles, probably the result of being much in the shade.

The little church, compared with the present edifice, stood far back on the property, probably at about the line where the present church building stops and the chapel begins. Its construction must have been largely the result of labor contributed by its members.

Just before the excavation work began upon the construction of the church of 1855, the frame church which had been dedicated in 1827 (not 1837 as most histories give it) after considerable and unavoidable delays, as the pastor said in his dedicatory sermon, "because of much embarrassment occasioned by our infant state," there being then only twenty-seven in communion, "was moved across the tracks."

The labor that must have been expended upon this church, simple in architectural appearance though it was, can be conceived only by realizing that in those days planing mills and mass production of structural parts of building were unknown and little dreamed of. All house building of any kind was framed with hand-hewn timber, braced by hand-wrought girdles of iron to hold the supporting beams in place.

The building before removal was cut in two and thus removed to a site that is now a coal yard near the corner of East Fourth Street and Roosevelt Avenue. About seven years ago, they were again moved, this time to their present location at 326 and 328 East Fourth Street, across the street, where they face the railroad track and can be plainly seen by any interested passenger on trains going to or coming from New York.

No. 328 is still dedicated to church uses, and is occupied as a Manse by the pastor of the congregation known as The Church of God and the Saints of Christ, the place of worship having been erected in the rear of this building.

No. 326 is the best preserved of the two structures, however, and is used as a dwelling, being now owned by the occupant. When the two buildings were removed to this site, a single build-

ing then standing there was cut in two and the two halves were attached to the two halves of the old church, for purposes of providing kitchens.

In the attic of No. 326 there are eloquent testimonials to this day of the reasons for the delay in the completion of the original building as referred to by the Rev. Mr. Bond.

There, in the subdued light, one might almost say, hallowed by sacred memories and loving, albeit, sweaty toil of the sturdy parishioners of 1826, the spectator stands amazed at the patience and the evident determination of those early Presbyterians to found their church in Plainfield for all time. Black walnut beams and girders, bear mute, but impressive, evidence of the labor that must have been expended with crude, half-tempered adzes and home-made mauls to cut and trim and fit these sustaining timbers so that down the long decades they might bid successful defiance to the destroying agencies of Time.

It would be irreverent for us to turn this page of history upon the little white Presbyterian church at Plainfield without quoting at least in part, the sermon delivered on January 5th, 1851, by the venerable pastor of this people, a sermon which has been preserved in the historical archives of the State of New Jersey as one of the masterpieces of eloquence and of historical fact. (See Pamphlets N. J. Vol. VIII, File No. N-040; N-42, Newark, N. J.)

From First Samuel, 12: 24: "Only fear the Lord, and serve Him with all your heart; for consider how great things He hath done for you," he took his text.

Reviewing the historical events that had transpired up to that time he said: "But while we mingle in the universal mourning at the death of Washington, we may still rejoice in the possession of that Liberty, which, under his guidance, with the Blessing of God, our fathers had achieved."

But the following extract from the minister's far famed eloquence, the lofty flights of his oratory, pathos, prophecy and importunity for a continuance of the great effort enjoined upon all mankind to forget "those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ," stands forth without question as the clearest glimpse we of this day and generation can have of the qualities that

bound his people so affectionately to him for nearly a third of a century:

"The memory of our kindred, the low whisper of our departed people, invite us to cast one more lingering look at the silent mansions of the dead.

"There lie entombed nearly 200 of our flock. Age, Activity, Youth and Infancy lie slumbering together. Over these the storms may rage and the thunder roll, but they heed them not. Over these may gather the tumult of the busy throng, and the shrill whistle or the rolling car may pierce the skies, but they shall not awake. Over these, the church-going bell may announce the sacred morn, and the songs of Zion sound loud the joyous day, but they may not come hither. Others shall be added to their number, and the sigh of the mourner mingle with the clods of the valley, but these shall still sleep sweetly.

"They count not the revolving years nor note the passing centuries; nor will they regard 'till time shall be no longer.' Then shall they listen to the Tramp of God. Then shall they startle into Life 'and burst the caverns of the grave. Then shall they take on immortality.' Then shall the living be changed in a moment; in the twinkling of an eye. Then shall all nations be gathered before the throne of God. Then and there must He appear and then and there shall be melded in eternity.

"Let us then arise and 'serve the Lord in truth and with a perfect heart.' Let us labor and pray that this house may be evermore 'The House of God, the Gate of Heaven' that here the closest blessings of His Grace may be shed down on us and on our children; that our land may be Immanuel's Land and the whole world be full of His Glory."

The First Presbyterian Church 1855-1877

CHAPTER III

"A Gloomy Box Inside and Out"

PICTURES of "the church of 1855" are extremely rare. The only one known to be in existence was quite accidentally discovered to be in the possession of Elder and Mrs. A. V. Searing, Jr., who kindly loaned it for its reproduction in that history.

It has been referred to as "A gloomy box inside and out" and the reasons for this characterization of the house of worship of that day is amply confirmed by the architectural features of the edifice, which, let it be remembered, was in strict compliance with the tendency of the time to enshroud religion and things religious with the gloom of darkness and the dead, rather than the radiancy of the light of joy and the completeness of Christ in life.

The church stood on the lot almost to the sidewalk line, abreast of the front of the J. B. Coward house adjoining to the east. It was built of brick plastered with brown mortar, ruled into squares about 9 by 15 inches so as to give the appearance as having been erected of brownstone. Surmounting the building was a rather stubby latticed tower into which the bell, which hung in the original frame church, was placed and which, by the way, is still calling worshipers to service as it did when the first pastor of the church preached to the congregation. It is thus the only articulate voice that links the congregation of 641 today with that of the 166 devout communicants who crowned their valiant construction efforts in 1827 with the opening service of praise and prayer when the little white church was completed.

The building had a peak roof, was about forty-five feet high, and its entrance was in the middle with two huge masonry buttresses on either side to take up the remainder of the building's width. Two Ionic columns of brown stone to match the masonry graced either side of the entrance and as one entered they faced at once the main aisle at the head of which was the communion table, standing upon a dais about seven inches from the floor and above it, raised from the floor by about thirty inches, stood the pulpit.

Looking from the pulpit one saw the gallery where the colored worshipers sat, they having access to their seats by circular stairways built on each side of the entrance up through the masonry

buttresses. A large gilt circular clock, given by Robert H. Radford, had a place on the face of the balcony directly opposite the pulpit. The lighting was accomplished by gas and emergency kerosene lamps.

Natural illumination, however, was through long narrow windows on either side of the church. These windows were about twenty-four inches wide and the lights were made up of a great number of small panes of glass each about five inches square. The windows were bowed at the top and on the outside there were full length shutters running from the floor level to the roof.

When the sun shone through the clear glass windows too brightly, as it is even wont to do today, the ushers would be asked to go out and close the shutters.

This would result in the removal of two long poles from their recesses at the entrance near where Howard A. Pope and W. A. Woodruff were wont to sit for years as ushers, each taking two windows they would proceed to slap and poke the shutters closed, amid much clatter, especially in summer when the windows were opened for ventilation.

The expression that the church was "gloomy within and without" has its chief foundation in that when the shutters were closed the black walnut trim of the interior of the church reflected so little light that at times it was difficult to read. However, most of the singing at the time was done by the congregation by the aid of a melodeon and a singing leader. Regular meetings were held for the purpose of learning the words of the hymns.

Those who could afford them, however, owned their own singing books and cushions and when they left the church by dismissal or otherwise, they took their hymn books and cushions with them for use in the churches to which they were transferred.

The seats were extremely narrow and straight backed. Miss Dietrich remembers an incident that gives an excellent idea of how uncomfortable the church pews were at that time. It seems that a Mrs. Milliken joined the church and in order to more completely enjoy the service, caused to be made for her an exceptionally wide cushion which, when it continued to slip off the pew onto the floor at prayer, finally had it nailed fast to the pew seat.

Each pew had a door with a catch upon it so that it would not swing open and encumber persons passing up and down the aisle.

The purpose of the doors is variously explained. Some insist that it was for the purpose of keeping the draft from the feet of the worshipers in winter. Others said that it indicated that the pew seats were reserved for belated members of the families. Pews were often sold and deeded to their owners for life use. Still others maintain that the real object of the door was to symbolize the Biblical admonition, Matthew 6:6:

> "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

The pastor's study was on the side of the church now used by the choir for assembly purposes and on the opposite side was a great heater the chimney for which ran up the rear wall of the church on the outside, about at the edge of the platform in the Sunday school room where, it will be recalled, there is a recessed arch in the face of the wall.

In course of time the chapel was added to the church, but it is not shown in the picture. When the chapel was added, the chimney seemed out of place. It left an awkward vacancy in the wall and so it was decided to build a counterpart of the chimney on the other side and the arch was put in so as to bridge the two structures and at the same time the wall above it was carried up to give added support to the roof of the chapel. Across this arch was formerly a motto, cut out and pasted, which read:

"Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only."

An ordinary crockery bowl, held by an elder, served as the baptismal font for years.

One Fourth of July eve some youths bent upon proclaiming anew the continued and successful independence of the United States of America, broke into the church and made the very welkin ring above the sleeping town until by dint of too great effort to accomplish their purpose, they swung the bell so that its lip caught under the mechanism controlling the tolling hammer, thus effectually silencing it while the drowsy populace hazily wondered what dire punishment had been so promptly meted out to the perpetrators of the tumult, with the nation's birthday still unborn.

The sexton, seeking to summon the people to their accustomed place of worship the following Sunday, pulled first on the ring-

ing rope and then on the tolling line, only to find both inflexible in his hands. Climbing into the belfry he saw, with consternation, the bell swung back as if to ring, but silent in the iron grip his feeble hands could not unloose, and so it came to pass that on that day those who went to church did so from sturdy habit instead of being bidden by the customary summoning bell.

CHAPTER IV

How the "Anxious Seat" Issue Divided the Church

THERE came about this time experiences which must have sorely tried the pastor's soul and caused the gravest apprehension among many of the congregation as to whether the Presbyterian Church of Plainfield would survive.

After protracted negotiation a section of the church departed to form the Second Presbyterian church, which later became the Crescent Avenue Presbyterian church.

The First church then had 230 communicants and the Session minutes show that indeed it had been richly blessed "with refreshings from the presence of the Lord."

During this period the question, probably inspired by frequent revival meetings held in the city, arose, regarding the installation of the Anxious Seats in the Presbyterian church. It might here be explained that the Anxious Seats were the front pews of the auditorium and whenever any member attending public worship, felt especially moved by the words of the pastor or by the Spirit they would leave their places in the pews and move up forward as a sign that they desired to be especially prayed for.

To this proposal the Rev. Mr. Bond was unalterably opposed; but some of the people, stirred by a deep religious fervor, launched a movement not only for the purpose of establishing another Presbyterian church, but of forcing the pastor, the Rev. Mr. Bond, to resign.

There came a time when Mr. Bond actually handed in his resignation as pastor. It was accepted and referred to the Presbytery of Elizabeth Town, but in view of the fact that the resignation had been acted upon by members of the church and by Elders who had already been dismissed from the church on their own application for the purpose of establishing another Presbyterian church in Plainfield, the Rev. Mr. Bond held that its acceptance was unconstitutional, unauthorized and therefore illegal, a position which the Presbytery of Elizabeth Town subsequently upheld.

On February 16, 1844, another Parish meeting was authorized and, upon due notice being given that it was the intention of the applicants for dismissal to organize another church, the

dismissals were granted to the following as a means of avoiding litigation:

William L. Simpson
William Hendrickson
Ira Pruden
James Thorn, Jr.
Daniel P. Martin
Frederick Cadmus
William McD. Coriell
Henry A. Cory
Isaac Van Nostrand
Leonard Vermeule
Elias Kirkpatrick
Albert Marsh
Richard Townsend
John S. Parker
Josiah Layton
Daniel Bullman
J. H. Coward
Jinnette E. Martin
William B. Hill
Harry Harris
Caroline Hill
Phebe E. E. Coward
Deborah C. Coward
William B. Shotwell
David Pound
Christopher Stewart
Mary Thorn
Charlotte Martin
Jane V. Clawson
Mary B. Clawson
Nancy B. Southard
Agnes Anderson
Eliza Anderson
Mary A. Shotwell
Agnes Anderson, Jr.
Mrs. Hariett H. Cory
Mrs. Sarah Layton
John L. Heath
Sophonia M. Heath
Sarah M. Campbell
Hannah Staats
Altha M. Marsh
Elsey Vermeule
Phebe Marsh
Zupporah R. Irven
Mary Hendrickson
Margaret Hendrickson
Henrietta Hendrickson
Mary C. Van Kirk
Harriett Van Kirk
William Nicoll
William Thorn
Milton F. Cushing
Fanny Cushing
Elizabeth Pound
Sarah Coriell
Eliza Jane Vermeule
Harriett Townsend
Elizabeth Boice
Abraham Cadmus
Anna Cadmus
Jenetie Cadmus
Eleanor Cadmus
John L. Laing
Elisha Coriell, Jr.
Eliza Coriell
Martha H. Coon
Martha E. Woodruff
Ann Martin
Ann B. Bullman
Margaret Barton
Eliza Jane Ditmas
Sarah Ditmas
Eliza C. Coriell
Eunice V. Van Nostrand
Frederick H. DeCamp
William Wilberson
David Whyte, Sr.
David Whyte, Jr.
Jane Whyte
Elizabeth Whyte

The requests were also granted of Robert Anderson, John Layton, Jr., Ephraim Coriell and William Hill, Jr., who were dismissed, their letters "stating that the applicants were members of this church and as such dismissed."

The remainder left in the original Presbyterian church was 148, and from that time the church had its serious struggles, finally resulting in the application previously made to the New Jersey State Legislature, for a change in the corporate title recorded March 28, 1826, as "The First Presbyterian Church and Congregation of Plainfield, New Jersey," to that of "The First Presbyterian Church of Plainfield, N. J." This change in name was approved March 27, 1857.

But during these years the same calm, dignified, kindly pastor went his way in the community. Those who remember him speak of his infinite patience and of his exemplary life. For nearly thirty-two years he was the leader of his flock. Slight in build, gentle of voice, he was always immaculately attired in the ministerial frock coat of the day and the white stock forming both collar and scarf.

Two years after the separation and the new church building had gotten well under way, he gave notice to the Session of his intention to ask leave to resign his Pastoral Charge, and on May 21st, 1857, the Session records the calling of the Rev. Joseph H. Myers to take his place.

It is interesting to note that when the Rev. Lewis Bond relinquished his charge there were only two members of his church still numbered among the founders of his church.

The Rev. Lewis Bond's picture is still reverently preserved by this congregation, having a place of honor in the Chapel. Some of his sermons have been preserved by his grandson, Clarence E. Bond.

The Manse of our church then stood directly across the street from the present edifice, where the Young Women's Christian Association Building is just being completed. The original building, however, now stands around the corner on Church Street, next adjoining the Y. W. C. A., where it was moved, and has been considerably altered to meet modern dwelling requirements. Later the church owned a manse on East Fifth Street, which was sold to aid the building fund for improvements to the present chapel.

This minute appears in the Session records of March 8, 1885:

> "In recognition of the death on January 23, 1885 of the Rev. Lewis Bond, for 32 years Pastor of this church, the Session desires to record its sense of his sterling character and worth as a Christian and a Gospel Minister, his long life of fidelity and usefulness, his tranquil and Godly walk and conversation, his unabated interest in the church, his peaceful death in the Lord as the Lord's."

The new church building was completed and dedicated during the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. Myers, who resigned within two years of his call to found a college in Florida.

The next minister was the Rev. Samuel M. Studdiford, who was installed in 1860, but who, after a brief pastorate was called to the Presbyterian church at Stewartsville, New Jersey, and in 1862 the Rev. Daniel V. McLean was called.

His pastorate was inaugurated with much enthusiasm and closed with circumstances which resembled in some degree the difficulties the congregation passed through when the Second Presbyterian church was formed, except that it contributed largely, in this case, to the formation of Trinity Reformed church, there being some question as to the legality of dismissing some forty members after he had resigned as pastor. Those who remember him recall that he was of a dynamic turn of mind, impetuous, fiery and yet a magnetic man who conceived for our church a militant place in the exposition of the Christian life.

A new pastor again occupied the pulpit in 1863 when the Rev. Benjamin Cory of Perth Amboy was called. He stayed between four and five years, during which time the church prospered and the membership increased greatly. He was in every respect a most charming and popular preacher. His daughter was married in the church during Mr. Cory's pastorate. Mr. Cory's wife was a member of the well-known Crane family of Elizabeth. He was called elsewhere and resigned early in 1868.

The Rev. Henry L. Teller, young, eloquent, polished, and an earnest Christian worker, became pastor as successor to the Rev. Mr. Cory, but resigned within two years of his being called to go to the Amsterdam, N. Y., Presbyterian church. His wife, who was wealthy in her own right, did not fancy the life of a minister's wife and soon induced her husband to give up the ministry.

The First Presbyterian Church 1888—1925

CHAPTER V

Sarah M. Latimer and the "Little Black Cross"

THE present church edifice stands as the monument to the personality and activity of the Rev. Kneeland P. Ketcham as the leader of this congregation from 1871 until March 13, 1902.

The Rev. Mr. Ketcham was called from Allentown, New Jersey, a settlement located near the present town of Bridgeton. He was a man of vision and action, energetic and with a personality that inspired great confidence and cooperation.

In the strange working out of God's plans it was not intended that the then pastor of the First Presbyterian church in Plainfield, just entering upon the second half of his long pastorate, should know that the business success of a non-believing cotton shipper from South Carolina would be the indirect source from which the physical monument of his ministry in Plainfield would rise even before his leadership was to end.

Yet the story of the remarkable life of Henry Latimer, proud of his disbelief in the Christian church, is not only entwined about the First Presbyterian church of Plainfield, but successive generations who shall gaze upon the little cross that tops the steeple will know that it is there because of him.

Born in poverty in the Carolina cotton fields, Henry Latimer as a boy took ship on a boat that was bringing cotton to New York at a time when there was a boom in that staple. The first time he arrived in the great metropolis, he bought himself a new hat and some clothes.

Earning his passage back and later coming north again with another shipment of cotton, he induced the captain to let him buy a bale. His earnings, great because of the boom, were quickly turned into the purchase of several more bales on the next trip north and the result was that in a short time he was operating a fleet of cotton-carrying boats for himself and finally directed the shipment north of great quantities of cotton so that in comparatively early life he was enabled to retire.

By some strange coincidence Mr. and Mrs. Latimer, the latter formerly Sarah M. Stocking, of Kentucky, selected Plainfield as their home and by a still stranger coincidence, in the light of the part this couple were later to play in the affairs of the

First Presbyterian church, they moved into a home on Bank Place within stone's throw of the very spot where the first church service of that congregation was held on the brink of what for years was known as Tier's pond. They later built a home on the corner of Bank Place and East Front Street near where now stands the Strand theatre.

As has been stated, Mr. Latimer did not believe in churches, but he is reported to have given an organ to the Masonic fraternity of this city.

At the time of his death his wife, desiring to have someone conduct the funeral services, called in the pastor of the church "up the street" and the Rev. Mr. Ketcham responded, conducting the services also at the grave.

This was the first time the Latimer family ever came in contact with the Christian church, according to Miss Addie Dietrich, who was intimately acquainted with Mrs. Latimer, the two families being very closely associated as neighbors and friends.

Mr. Latimer's death, and the loss of their adopted son, David, in the Civil War caused Mrs. Latimer to reach out for the consolation of the church and when Mr. Ketcham called to comfort her in her affliction, Mrs. Latimer asked what she could do to aid him in realizing the aspirations he had for the enlargement of the influence of his church in Plainfield.

Upon hearing that the church had decided to build a new edifice, she volunteered to give the necessary amount needed to complete the contributions which had already begun to come in from the members of the congregation, which had grown to a total of 268, not including the membership of the Bible Class, totalling 190 in addition.

Her gifts embraced $32,000 for the church, $6,000 for the organ which, plus $2,000 received by the sale of the old one, cost $8,000. Gifts for finishing the church and special purposes brought the total of Mrs. Latimer's gifts to the church, so far as known, to $44,000, which also included the beautiful stained glass circular window in the front of the edifice.

Two incidents are sufficiently authenticated in connection with Mrs. Latimer's benefactions as to merit inclusion in a History of the Presbyterian Church of Plainfield. One concerns the circular stained glass window and the other the little cross that surmounts the steeple.

J. M. Bettman and the pastor of the church believed, with the

members of the congregation, that some tribute should be made to Mrs. Latimer's generosity either in the form of a stained glass window or a tablet. To all proposals of this sort the modest widow of the cotton trader entered objections. She desired that her gifts be received in as great secrecy as possible.

The building committee consisting, besides the pastor and Mr. Bettman, of Robert H. Radford, William H. Shotwell, Edward St. John, Howard A. Pope and F. C. Lounsbury, believed that at least some record should be made of this gracious woman in the structure she so freely helped to build. It was decided that the manufacturer of the stained glass window be appealed to in some way to work in her name, and those desiring to see the artist's handicraft in this particular need may look on the selvedge of the window near where it enters the frame on the central edge.

Mrs. Latimer did not live to see the church entirely completed. Toward the completion of the structure, however, she was taken in a wheel chair, accompanied by J. Fred MacDonald, who, with William H. Shotwell and William A. Woodruff were later named executors of her estate, to the site. She sat on the platform with Mrs. N. W. West, another generous contributor toward the building fund, when the corner stone was laid.

During the course of conversation on the way back, Mr. Shotwell, not knowing about the inscription of her name on the window, again pressed her for permission to place her name somewhere on the church or in it.

After some thought on the subject, and when she had been placed in a comfortable chair in her home, she spoke of her husband saying that the only reference of a sympathetic nature she had ever heard him make to a Christian church was the fact that once when he was a little boy on the cotton plantations he had gone to a Sunday school on which there was a little black cross. Mrs. Latimer then said, in the presence of all three men who had walked back with her from the church site, that if they insisted upon doing something in memory of her that, in remembrance of this remark by her husband, they put a little black cross on the top of the church.

After her death, which occurred very soon thereafter, the Executors, who proved to be the three men who heard her make the remark, advised the church, through its finance committee, which included the Pastor, Elders, Deacons and Trustees, and F. C. Lounsbury, W. H. Van Slyke and Peter Hoagland, that

a little black cross had to be included in the architecture of the church as a condition of the payment of the remainder of Mrs. Latimer's benefactions.

Reporting this to the congregation, some protest developed from a small section of the membership, upon the ground that a cross of whatever color was out of place upon a Presbyterian church. The position of the Executors could, of course, be only that of "No cross, no money."

It was finally decided to put the cross on the top of the steeple and, while there was some quiet mumbling, it soon caused little comment and few finally noticed that it was there.

At about noon time one extremely hot day in July when the interest in the cross had entirely waned, a puffy white cloud came out of the west in what otherwise was a clear sky. It proved to be a little shower with only a single flash of lightning, but that bolt struck off the little black cross and tumbled it in fragments upon the church yard below.

At once there was a vigorous renewal of the discussion about the propriety of having the cross on the church, but when the Executors, who had long since settled up the estate, paying the residue to two nephews who lived somewhere in Kentucky, were appealed to it was their insistence upon keeping faith with the only stipulation Mrs. Latimer made in connection with her great gifts, and, further, upon the continued importunities of the church people she benefited, that a little black cross should be replaced upon the steeple, which was accordingly done.

Again the cross incident had passed into mutual forgetfulness when, again, also on a July day, and at noon, another small puffy cloud came over the low lying Watchung mountains and, during the shower that followed, a single forked flash from its curling center again removed the cross without doing any other damage to the building.

This time the objection to the presence of the cross was based upon the belief that, lightning having struck twice in the same place, was most certainly a manifestation of the displeasure of Providence and that the cross should not be replaced.

However, after due course, the cross again appeared at the top of the steeple, and while the tower has been struck since by lightning, the cross has remained to this day, having lately been substituted by a copper cross of sturdy construction.

It is interesting to record at this point some other incidents and facts concerning the erection of this church.

On June 6, 1888, a special meeting was held by the Session when it was decided to call a Parish meeting for the purpose of building, if the way be clear, a new church. On June 19, 1888, the building committee appointed Oscar S. Teale, architect, who now lives in the city of Newark.

J. W. Pangborn was the builder who submitted a bid of $26,900 for the construction of the building and the contract was awarded to him. The records of the Session under date of September 16, 1888, show that the building, including the organ and every appurtenance, cost about $45,000. The entire church building was appraised by John Abbott, of the Board of Trustees, before the Great War, for the purpose of determining how much insurance the congregation ought to carry on the property, at $100,000. Mr. Abbott was a practical builder.

The contributors to the church building fund were as follows:

Sarah M. Latimer
William R. Anthony
J. W. Anthony
John Barr
J. M. Bettman
Theophilus Bond
Miss Kate Bond
Aaron Berkaw
Sallie Butcher
Rutgers V. Cadmus
Abraham L. Cadmus
Elisha Coriell
Mrs. D. Chase
Mrs. J. W. Craig
John Dietrich
Mrs. Forbes
Peter Hoagland
Alvin E. Hoagland
Rev. K. P. Ketcham
Mrs. Fanny Ketcham
Isaac L. Miller
Miss Meig
Mrs. Charles McCutcheon
Miss Jane Petrie
Mrs. Petrie
Howard A. Pope
R. H. Radford
A. G. Remsen
Henry W. Rogers
Carrie Runyon
R. J. Shaw
William H. Shotwell
Freeman J. Shotwell
A. V. Shotwell
J. Augustus Smith
Edward St. John
J. W. Schenck
J. Evarts Tracy
W. H. Van Slyke
William Van Winkle
Miss Vanderweg
Mrs. N. W. West
C. J. Westervelt
J. M. White

The new church was dedicated with special services on the evenings of June 25th and 28th, 1889. The services on June 25th were conducted by the Pastor, the Rev. Kneeland P. Ketcham, the dedicatory sermon being preached by the Rev. Charles L. Thompson, D.D., of New York City.

The services on June 28th were conducted by the Rev. W. L. Richards, pastor of the Crescent Avenue Presbyterian church, with addresses by the Rev. D. J. Yerkes, pastor of the First Baptist church; Rev. Erskine M. Rodman, rector of Grace Episcopal

church; Rev. Cornelius Schenck, pastor of Trinity Reformed Church; Rev. Charles L. Goodrich, pastor of the Congregational church, and Rev. Asa R. Dilts. There were also addresses by James McGee, C. W. McCutcheon and William D. Murray.

The official seating capacity of the church building is 900 and every seat was occupied during these services, for the church, with its inclined auditorium with seats arranged fan like and radiating from the pulpit, was then a distinct architectural novelty.

The design of the church was similar to the Methodist Episcopal church at Hackettstown, which also was designed by Oscar S. Teale, architect, and many Plainfielders passing through the main street of that Warren county city stop to compare the architectural face of the edifice there with that in Plainfield. Howard A. Pope, William H. Shotwell and John M. Bettman were the committee sent to Hackettstown to view that church and upon their recommendation the design of the Plainfield church was made like it, but modified in some respects, to conform to local conditions, particularly as to lot width.

Dr. Ellis W. Hedges was organist for a great many years and A. V. Searing, Jr., and Edward Petrie were for many years official organ pumpers.

One time when an eminent organist from New York came out to give a recital he brought with him a device that operated a dozen-odd pedals at once so as to produce climactic volume, and the frantic efforts of the young organ pumpers to keep the instrument supplied with air, and thus not to spoil the concert, resulted in great physical fatigue between the two assistants of the organist and an hour or two of incidental wonderment as to what sort of a many-handed and footed "monster" sat at the console.

On March 13, 1892, Dr. Ketcham applied for a dissolution of the pastoral relation and on July 6, 1892, a call was extended to and accepted by the Rev. Henry L. Miller.

It was, however, destined for him never to become the actual pastor of the church, because just while preparations were being made to receive him and he had moved his household effects to Plainfield, Mr. Miller's wife was taken critically ill and he declined the call on that account.

CHAPTER VI

The Close of the First Century

ON October 20, 1892, a call was extended to the Rev. Charles E. Herring, of New York City, where he had been ordained to the ministry by the Presbytery of that city, January 19, 1888, the same year, it is pleasant to note that the church that he was destined to serve as pastor for 29 years, was built. He received the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy from Columbia University in 1887, and the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from New York University in 1907; but the honor that he most craved, but resolutely awaited for it to be honorarily conferred, namely, that of Doctor of Divinity, was received by his widow, Alice Miller Herring, a few days after his death at Muhlenberg Hospital, Plainfield, May 26th, 1921, he having been stricken while preaching his usual sermon Sunday morning, May 15th, at 11:40 o'clock.

This incident was one of the most tragic in the history of this church. It was a bright sunshiny Spring morning and the church was well filled when, after greeting the children in Sunday school as was his wont before entering the pulpit, the congregation assembling for worship saw him in his pulpit as usual.

No hint of anything amiss occurred until, after being well started upon his sermon, the text of which was "Moses, my servant, is dead," he paused and said:

"I cannot go on with the sermon. It is all right." When, in sinking to his chair, he said to the treasurer of the church, Howard W. Satterfield, who, sitting close to him, was first to grasp the full extent of the minister's distress, "I want to go home. Brother Manning, will you dismiss the people?"

Dr. N. W. Currie and Mrs. Herring, both of whom were sitting in the gallery, hurried to the study as tender hands lifted the stalwart but now limp frame of the pastor into the room where his wife and physician awaited him, while Elder J. H. Manning, with a benediction, dismissed the congregation.

Nine days later Dr. Herring passed away in Muhlenberg hospital and was buried, after a double funeral service, in Hillside cemetery, this city.

The services in tribute to the pastor, thus suddenly taken from the leadership of his congregation, were held on successive days.

On a Sunday evening a few weeks before he was stricken, the church was filled to capacity with the masonic fraternity of Plainfield and friends as a tribute to the long years as Chaplain in Jerusalem Lodge No. 26 F. & A. M. and also as a public testimonial of their appreciation of Dr. Herring as a citizen and patriot.

Dr. Herring remarked to friends after the service that it was the first time in many years that the full capacity of the church had been taken at an evening service.

Little did the genial minister realize that within a very short time the same fraternity and the same friends would again fill the church to a point where the capacity of the edifice was to be exceeded to the extent even that many of every color and creed who sought to pay tribute to his memory had to be turned away, for there was a genuine feeling "that he belonged not alone to the sorrowing wife and sister but to the whole community."

The Rev. R. F. Y. Pierce, Baptist minister, and a Chaplain of the New York Police Department, presiding over and voicing the people's tribute at that service, summed up the public's appraisal of Dr. Herring's character and citizenship in these words during his address on the subject, "I Live," before an enthralled audience:

"Our brother, Dr. Herring, embraced an ideal of an ennobled life and wrought a glorious manhood which made him a prince among his fellow men. His gentleness, kindness, sympathy, strength of character, genial spirit, broad charity and virility of Christian manhood made him to be revered as one of God's noblemen.

"He lived, not for himself, but with the mind of the Master, he sought to lift the burdens from the hearts of others, to speak words of cheer to those fainting and faltering on Life's weary way. His was the joy to wipe sorrow's tears from everflowing eyes; to sow the seeds of truth in hearts of age and youth; to lead the wanderer home; to teach the world about Christ, and to be a friend of man.

"His memory will ever be a precious legacy, not only to the loved ones of his heart and home, but to all who came within the circle of his influence."

In strict accordance with a plan for his funeral which he had prepared some years before and was discovered among his papers after his death, the body lay in state in the church he

loved and served well nigh three decades, lovingly guarded by representatives of the Session, Deacons, Trustees, officers of his church and Masonic brethren in the persons of: A. W. Dunning and A. V. Searing, Jr., until midnight; Allen E. Beals and G. F. Murphy until 3 o'clock; F. O. Dunning and John S. Johnston until 6 A.M. and George B. Wean and W. H. Abbott until 9 A.M. He was borne to his last mortal resting place on the beautiful slopes of Hillside cemetery by Alvin E. Hoagland, Isaac L. Williamson, John H. Johnston, Dr. N. W. Currie, John G. Bicknell and Allen E. Beals.

There are many today who pay to Dr. Herring the encomium so richly earned that his great gift to the First Presbyterian church of Plainfield was the deep-seated spirit of Brotherly Love that has embued the members of this church body over so many happy years.

It was during the pastorate of the Rev. Dr. Herring that an incident occurred which resulted in enriching the church with its beautiful onyx baptismal font, the first two children to be baptised at which were the great-grandchildren of the Rev. Lewis Bond, first pastor of the church, Bessie Wright and Clarence Leslie Bond, children of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Eugene Bond.

Dr. Herring was invited on a certain occasion to deliver a sermon at Crescent Avenue church. In the audience was Mr. Charles L. Hyde, who listened with great interest to what Dr. Herring had to say. After the service he made inquiry as to who that preacher was and, upon being told it was the Rev. Dr. Herring of the First Presbyterian church, he declared:

"That is the kind of a preacher I like and we will worship in his church hereafter."

During his attendance upon public worship in Dr. Herring's church, Mrs. Hyde noticed that there was no suitable font for the baptism service, whereupon, making further inquiry, she arranged to present to the church the beautiful example of the stone cutter's art that graces the front of the auditorium to the left of the pulpit.

Other notable baptisms at this font were: Irving Bond Hinman, Kenneth Russell Hinman, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Grove Porter Hinman; Gordon Van der Vere Bond, son of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Russell Bond, descendants of the first pastor of the church; and Harold Deforrest and Donald Deforrest Beebe, sons of Mr. and Mrs. H. S. Beebe, direct descendants of Pier-

pont Potter, one of the founders of the Presbyterian church of Plainfield.

On June 19, 1921, a "Pastor Selection Committee" consisting of E. M. Cave, F. O. Dunning, Harry Williams, Dr. N. W. Currie, John S. Johnston, Alvin E. Hoagland, Mrs. T. C. Bodine, Mrs. Harold S. Beebe and Allen E. Beals met for organization and by acclamation Mr. Dunning was made chairman and Mr. Beals secretary.

Events seemed to amply evidence the predestination of the Rev. Leroy W. Warren, just returned from Europe following a long period of war service in this country, to be the pastor of this church and spiritual leader of this people.

The Rev. L. B. Crane, of Elizabeth, hearing of the vacancy existing in the pulpit of our church, suggested that representatives of our congregation go to hear Mr. Warren preach in his church, the Westminster Presbyterian, at Elizabeth. Elders Charles M. Hummer, F. O. Dunning and A. V. Searing, Jr., attended accordingly. Their report to the committee on Pastor Selection, submitted after its organization, was so unanimously enthusiastic that the recommendation was approved that it enter the name of Mr. Warren as its first candidate, resulting in Mr. Warren, upon invitation, preaching two sermons before leaving for his customary summer sojourn in the mountains of Colorado.

During the summer this committee personally heard fourteen candidates and carried on correspondence with one hundred and thirty-nine persons, but at its sixth meeting it reported unanimously that "after impartially analyzing every one from every angle, there is none who stands forth anywhere near so favorably as does the Rev. Leroy W. Warren, of Galena, Ill."

It is a significant vindication of the judgment and wisdom of this committee that during the pastorate of Mr. Warren, more than 330 new members have been received into full communion of this church, a manse at 41 Sanford Avenue has been purchased, and the chapel has been rebuilt at a cost of $20,000, and that complete harmony and spiritual unity has prevailed, making the total membership at the time of the annual meeting on April 15, 1925, 641, the highest total ever recorded in our church history.

It is fitting to note in connection with the rebuilding of the chapel, finished in the Spring of 1925, that at a bazaar held for the purpose of aiding in liquidating some of the cost of the improvement made necessary by the growth of the Bible School, an en-

graved picture of the White House at Washington, autographed by Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, wife of the President of the United States, was sent by her to the Guild for sale.

The Elders of our church from its organization down to the annual meeting of 1925 follow:

1825 Robert Anderson
1825 John Layton
1833 Jarvis B. Ayres
1841 Lucas V. Hoagland
1845 Abijah Titus
1845 Andrew A. Cadmus
1847 Ephraim Coriell
1847 Job Squier
1850 Tunison T. Soper
1856 Peter J. Smith
1858 E. Dean Dow
1858 Ellis Potter
1858 Frazee Cole
1858 David J. Gordon
1858 Edmund V. Shotwell
1864 Peter Hoagland
1864 Daniel Van Winkle
1864 Peter B. Westervelt
1871 Samuel Milliken, Jr.
1876 Benjamin F. McKeage
1880 Isaac L. Miller
1882 Henry B. Opdyke
1886 John M. Bettman
1889 Edward St. John
1890 F. C. Lounsbury
1890 A. L. Cadmus
1892 E. M. Cave
1892 William H. Shotwell
1893 W. L. Ladd
1893 R. H. Radford
1894 Howard A. Pope
1900 Leroy H. Gates
1908 J. H. Manning
1910 Charles M. Hummer
1918 F. O. Dunning
1918 Harry Williams
1919 A. V. Searing, Jr.
1920 E. D. George
1920 F. L. Palmer
1923 Dr. Thomas D. Blair
1923 Dominico Di Diario (*Italian Mission*)
1925 Arthur N. Hazeltine

THE END

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History of Plainfield, by O. B. Leonard.

History of Plainfield, by A. Van Doren Honeyman.

History of Middlesex County, 1882, Public Library.

Pamphlets of New Jersey, Vol. VIII.

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